

Message Text

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EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT PARIS 9718 ACTION SECSTATE INFO CANBERRA
JAKARTA HONG KONG KUALA LUMPUR MANILA RANGOON TAIPEI
SINGAPORE WELLINGTON SEOUL TOKYO 16 APRIL.

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 09718

EXDIS

E.O. 11652:XGDS-3
TAGS: SREF, CB, US
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL RELIEF AND ASYLUM FROM
CAMBODIANS

REF: (A) STATE 084084 (B) STATE 084161

SUMMARY: THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO SHOW
ITS TRADITIONAL HOSPITALITY TO POLITICAL REFUGEES; THERE
WILL THEREFORE BE NO PROBLEM OF ANY FORCEFUL REPATRIA-
TION OF KHMER TO PHNOM PENH. ON THE OTHER HAND, NO
FRENCH GOVERNMENTAL, AND PROBABLY ONLY LIMITED PRIVATE
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FUNDS WILL BE ABLE TO ASSIST KHMER WHO STAY IN FRANCE.
THERE ARE URGENT FINANCIAL PROBLEMS OF FORMER GKR
EMBASSY PERSONNEL AND SOME GKR OFFICIALS NOW IN FRANCE,
AND SOME SPECIAL MEASURES WILL BE REQUIRED. LONGER
TERM "REFUGEE" ASSISTANCE CAN BE HANDLED THROUGH INTER-

NATIONAL AND VOLUNTARY AGENCIES. THERE WILL PROBABLY BE FEW REQUESTS FOR POLITICAL ASYLUM; REQUESTS FROM SOME HIGH OFFICIALS WILL BE SPECIAL CASES. WE SHALL NEED MORE EXPLICIT INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS FROM WASHINGTON BEFORE WE CAN PROCEED TO TRY TO GET MORE DETAILS ON FUNDS NEEDED AND ON SPECIAL ENTRY PROCEDURES FOR THOSE SEEKING POLITICAL ASYLUM. END SUMMARB

1. BECAUSE OF GREATER URGENCY OF NEEDS OF CAMBODIANS, VIETNAMESE PROBLEM WILL BE COVERED IN SUBSEQUENT MESSAGE. OUR RESPONSE TO REFTELS HAS BEEN DELAYED BECAUSE OF GOF APRIL 12 RECOGNITION OF GRUNK WHICH HAS DRAMATICALLY ALTERED THE SITUATION AND MADE IT DIFFICULT TO CONSULT WITH CAMBODIAN AND FRENCH OFFICIALS.

2. FRENCH POLICY CONCERNING CAMBODIANS. THE GOF HAS INFORMED US THAT THEY WILL CONTINUE TO BE RELATIVELY LENIENT IN GIVING VISAS TO CAMBODIANS WISHING TO COME TO FRANCE. INSTRUCTIONS WILL SHORTLY BE SENT TO FRENCH MISSIONS TO CEASE PLACING VISAS IN GKR PASSPORTS, BUT VISAS WILL CONTINUE TO BE PLACED IN LAISSEZ PASSER OR OTHER DOCUMENTATION FRENCH WILL CONSIDER ADEQUATE. WHEN REGULATIONS HAVE BEEN DRAWN UP, WE CAN ATTEMPT TO GET DETAILS. GOF WILL PERMIT FORMER DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL TO RETAIN DIPLOMATIC IDENTITY CARDS FOR A "REASONABLE PERIOD OF TIME" AND WILL THEN GIVE THEM A "CARTE DE RESIDENCE TEMPORAIRE PRIVILEGIEE", FOR WHICH NATIONALS OF FORMER FRENCH INDOCHINA COUNTRIES CAN QUALIFY. REGULATIONS WILL BE WORKED OUT BY THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR. HENCE, THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT WILL BE VERY LIBERAL IN PROVIDING A PERIOD OF SOME DURATION TO PERMIT CAMBODIANS TO DECIDE WHETHER THEY WISH TO REMAIN IN FRANCE, WHETHER THEY CONSIDER IT SAFE TO RETURN TO PHNOM PENH, OR WHETHER THEY WILL WISH TO GO ELSEWHERE. GOF OFFICIAL EMPHASIZED FRANCE'S TRADITIONAL ROLE OF HOSPITALITY TOWARD POLITICAL REFUGEES AND CONFIDENTIAL

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INSISTED THAT NO REQUEST FROM THE GRUNK TO EXPEL OR OTHERWISE PERSECUTE ANY CAMBODIAN IN FRANCE WOULD BE ACCEPTED. A CONDITION FOR ASYLUM IN FRANCE WOULD BE TOTAL ABSTENANCE FROM POLITICAL ACTIVITY (FRENCH ARE INCENSED AT POLITICAL ACTIVITY OF GENERAL SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ). ON A LONGER TERM BASIS, CAMBODIANS WILL BE ABLE FAIRLY EASILY TO CONVERT THEIR TEMPORARY RESIDENT PERMIT INTO PERMANENT RESIDENCE AND MANY WILL NO DOUBT QUALIFY FOR APPLICATION FOR FRENCH NATIONALITY. DURING THIS INTERIM PERIOD THEY WOULD BE GIVEN THE STATUS OF POLITICAL REFUGEE, THE REGULATIONS CONCERNING WHICH WILL BE WORKED OUT BY THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR. THE GOF WILL NOT ACCEDE TO GRUNK REQUEST (IF THERE IS ONE) THAT CAMBODIANS IN FRANCE, INCLUDING STUDENTS, ACQUIRE

GRUNK PASSPORTS OR REGISTER WITH THE GRUNK EMBASSY. GOF NOW ASSUMES THAT FRENCH SCHOLARSHIPS WILL BE CONTINUED FOR CAMBODIAN STUDENTS ONLY UNTIL THE END OF THIS ACADEMIC YEAR; GIVEN THE BILATERAL FRANCO/CAMBODIAN PROGRAM, GOF WILL BE UNABLE TO PROVIDE SCHOLARSHIPS FOR NEXT YEAR TO ANY CAMBODIAN STUDENTS OTHER THAN THOSE PROPOSED BY THE GRUNK. QUAI NOTED THAT GOF'S GENEROSITY IN ACCEPTING POLITICAL REFUGEES WOULD NOT EXTEND TO GENEROSITY WITH FUNDS FOR RESETTLEMENT. SOME FRENCH CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS MAY PROVIDE FUNDS, BUT HE EXPECTED THEY WOULD BE LIMITED. FRANCE WILL HAVE NO OPPOSITION TO THE CHANNELING OF U.S. GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE FUNDS THROUGH THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSION (UNHCR) OR ICEM OR PRIVATE FRENCH AGENCIES. WE ARE IN CONTACT WITH QUAI CONCERNING GOF VIEWS ON MOST SUITABLE PRIVATE AGENCIES.

3. ROUGH ESTIMATES ON CAMBODIAN COMMUNITY. BECAUSE OF PRECIPITOUS MOVE OF GKR EMBASSY FILES DURING THE WEEK-END, KHMER CHARGE HAS SO FAR BEEN ABLE TO GIVE US ONLY ROUGH ESTIMATE OF NUMBER OF CAMBODIANS IN FRANCE. HE BELIEVES THAT THERE ARE WELL OVER 100 CAMBODIANS WHO ARE FORMER GKR OFFICIALS OR THEIR DEPENDENTS. MANY OF THESE KHMER WILL REQUIRE SHORT TERM FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND SOME MAY WISH POLITICAL ASYLUM IN THE UNITED STATES. THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 3,000 CAMBODIAN STUDENTS IN FRANCE AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL, MOST WITH SOME FORM OF CONFIDENTIAL

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FRENCH GOVERNMENT SCHOLARSHIP. HE ESTIMATED THERE ARE 10,000 STUDENTS HERE UNDER PRIVATE AUSPICES IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS. MANY OF THE LATTER WILL BE RECALLED TO PHNOM PENH BY THEIR PARENTS IF AND WHEN THE SITUATION THERE STABILIZES. AMONG THE OLDER STUDENTS MANY CAN BE EXPECTED GRADUALLY TO GO OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE, PARTICULARLY IF THEY ARE PERMITTED TO CONTINUE THEIR STUDIES IN FRANCE. SOME STUDENTS MAY WISH POLITICAL ASYLUM IN THE UNITED STATES BUT NO ESTIMATES CAN BE MADE AT THIS TIME. IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE CATEGORIES, A NUMBER OF PROMINENT CAMBODIANS HAVE RETIRED TO FRANCE OR HAVE BEEN "CAUGHT HERE" WHILE UNDERGOING MEDICAL TREATMENT. MOST OF THESE PROMINENT CAMBODIANS APPEAR TO HAVE SUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO EKE OUT A LIVING, PARTICULARLY WHEN ASSISTED BY CHILDREN OR IN-LAWS WORKING IN FRANCE. SOME OF THESE FORMER HIGH OFFICIALS MAY HOWEVER WISH TO MOVE TO THE UNITED STATES AS A LONG TERM SOLUTION. OTHER KHMERS, INCLUDING FORMER MINISTER AND FORMER DIPLOMATS, ARE ALREADY COMING TO FRANCE AS A "COUNTRY OF CONVENIENCE" WHERE THEY HOPE TO WAIT OUT THE CURRENT CRITICAL PERIOD OF CHANGE IN CAMBODIA BEFORE THEY DECIDE WHERE THEY WISH TO SETTLE PERMANENTLY.

4. FINANCIAL RELIEF. WE SHALL BE ATTEMPTING OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS TO OBTAIN EITHER DIRECTLY OR FROM THE PERSONS OR THROUGH THE FORMER GKR CHARGE FURTHER DETAILS ON THE DEGREE OF FINANCIAL NEED OF FORMER OFFICIAL CAMBODIANS NOW IN FRANCE. WE BELIEVE THAT SOME REQUIREMENT MAY INITIALLY BE QUITE LARGE SINCE MANY OF THE MEMBERS OF THE KHMER EMBASSY HERE HAVE NOT RECEIVED THEIR SALARY FOR THREE TO FOUR MONTHS AND HAVE ACCUMULATED DEBTS WHICH WILL PUT THEM IN LEGAL JEOPARDY ONCE THEIR DIPLOMATIC STATUS LAPSES. IN ADDITION THERE WILL NO DOUBT BE EXPENSES AS THEY MAKE THE TRANSITION FROM RELATIVELY POSH DIPLOMATIC ACCOMMODATIONS TO THOSE BEFITTING A REFUGEE. APPARENTLY FRENCH GOVERNMENT SEES NO MEANS AT THIS POINT TO PROTECT THESE FORMER DIPLOMATS FROM LEGAL PURSUIT FOR DEBTS INCURRED WHEN THEY HAD DIPLOMATIC STATUS. WE BELIEVE SPECIAL PROVISIONS WILL THEREFORE BE REQUIRED FOR THE LIQUIDATION OF THE FINANCIAL PROBLEM OF FORMER DIPLOMATS IN ADDITION TO
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WHATEVER MORE REGULAR "REFUGEE" ASSISTANCE MAY BE PROVIDED SUBSEQUENTLY. SOME OF THE YOUNGER STUDENTS MAY REQUIRE SOME ASSISTANCE UNTIL THEY CAN BE REPATRIATED SOME UNIVERSITY LEVEL STUDENTS MAY REQUIRE SOME HELP WHEN THEIR SCHOLARSHIPS LAPSE.

5. POLITICAL ASYLUM. DESPITE THE RELATIVELY LARGE NUMBER OF CAMBODIANS IN FRANCE, WE BELIEVE THE NUMBER ACTUALLY REQUESTING POLITICAL ASYLUM IN THE UNITED STATES WILL NOT BE VERY LARGE. THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT WILL BE GENEROUS IN PERMITTING KHMER TO STAY, AND MANY WILL FIND SOME MEANS OF GETTING ADEQUATE EMPLOYMENT IN FRANCE. ON THE OTHER HAND, IN SOME SPECIAL CASES, FORMER HIGH RANKING OFFICIALS WILL CONSIDER THEMSELVES MORE SAFE IN THE UNITED STATES THAN IN FRANCE AND THEY ALSO HOLD THAT PREVIOUS "SERVICE FOR THE U.S." MERITS SPECIAL USG CONSIDERATION. WE ARE PROCESSING SPECIAL CABLES CONCERNING THE CASE OF FORMER CHIEF OF STATE CHENG HENG, FORMER COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE FANK, SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ, AND FORMER MINISTER OF REFUGEES DR. TOAN THACH. IN ADDITION SOME YOUNG CAMBODIANS WHO STUDIED IN THE U.S. MAY PREFER RESIDENCE THERE TO ASYLUM IN FRANCE.

6. EMBASSY HAS TEMPORARILY SET UP SYSTEM WHEREBY ALL REQUESTS FOR ASYLUM (EXCEPT FOR VIPS), REFUGEE STATUS AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE ARE DIRECTED TO VISA SECTION. THE APPLICANTS ARE REQUESTED COMPLETE FS-118 (BIO. INFORMATION FORM), ARE INTERVIEWED BY CONOFF FOR DETERMINATION URGENCY OF SITUATION, AND ARE TOLD THEIR REQUESTS ARE UNDER CONSIDERATION.

7. CONCLUSIONS: QUICK DECISIONS SHOULD BE MADE ON FUNDS AVAILABLE TO TAKE CARE OF EXPENSES CONNECTED WITH CLOSING OF GKR DIPLOMATIC ESTABLISHMENTS. A SUBSEQUENT PHASE WOULD BE ASSISTANCE TO CAMBODIAN OFFICIALS AND PERHAPS SOME STUDENTS OF A TRANSITIONAL NATURE (HANDLED THROUGH VOLUNTARY AGENCIES) INCLUDING FOR PERSONS WHO WILL BE SETTLING PERMANENTLY IN FRANCE OR ELSEWHERE. POLITICAL ASYLUM IN THE UNITED STATES BREAKS DOWN INTO TWO CATEGORIES: (A) THOSE FORMER HIGH RANKING OFFICIALS
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WHO BELIEVE (WITH SOME JUSTIFICATION) THAT THEY DESERVE SPECIAL U.S. CONSIDERATION; AND (B) THOSE WITH NO SPECIAL CLAIM ON THE UNITED STATES WHO NONETHELESS PREFER ASYLUM THERE TO ELSEWHERE.

8. ACTION REQUESTED: WE SHALL NEED MORE SPECIFIC INFORMATION CONCERNING USG INTENTIONS CONCERNING POLITICAL ASYLUM AND PARTICULARLY FINANCIAL RELIEF BEFORE WE CAN ATTEMPT TO GET MORE DETAILED INFORMATION FROM THE GOF AND THE CAMBODIANS HERE. WE SHALL BE UNABLE, FOR EXAMPLE, TO JUSTIFY ASKING FOR ESTIMATES OF FUNDS REQUIRED FOR GKR EMBASSY PERSONNEL WITHOUT AT LEAST IMPLYING THAT WE SHALL BE PREPARED TO HELP MEET THEIR NEEDS. IF THE DEPARTMENT DECIDES, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT EXCEPT IN UNUSUAL CASES (SUCH AS CHENG HENG), WE SHALL BE UNABLE TO PROVIDE EXCEPTIONAL ASSISTANCE DIRECTLY TO CAMBODIANS, BUT CAN ONLY TRANSMIT FUNDS THROUGH INTERNATIONAL OR VOLUNTARY AGENCIES, THEN WE SHOULD NOT IMPLY TO KHMER OR FRENCH THAT WE SHALL BE ACCEPTING INDIVIDUAL REQUESTS FOR US ASSISTANCE.
STONE UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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